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THE BLESSED DEAD

REV. E. H. BICKERSTETH. M. A

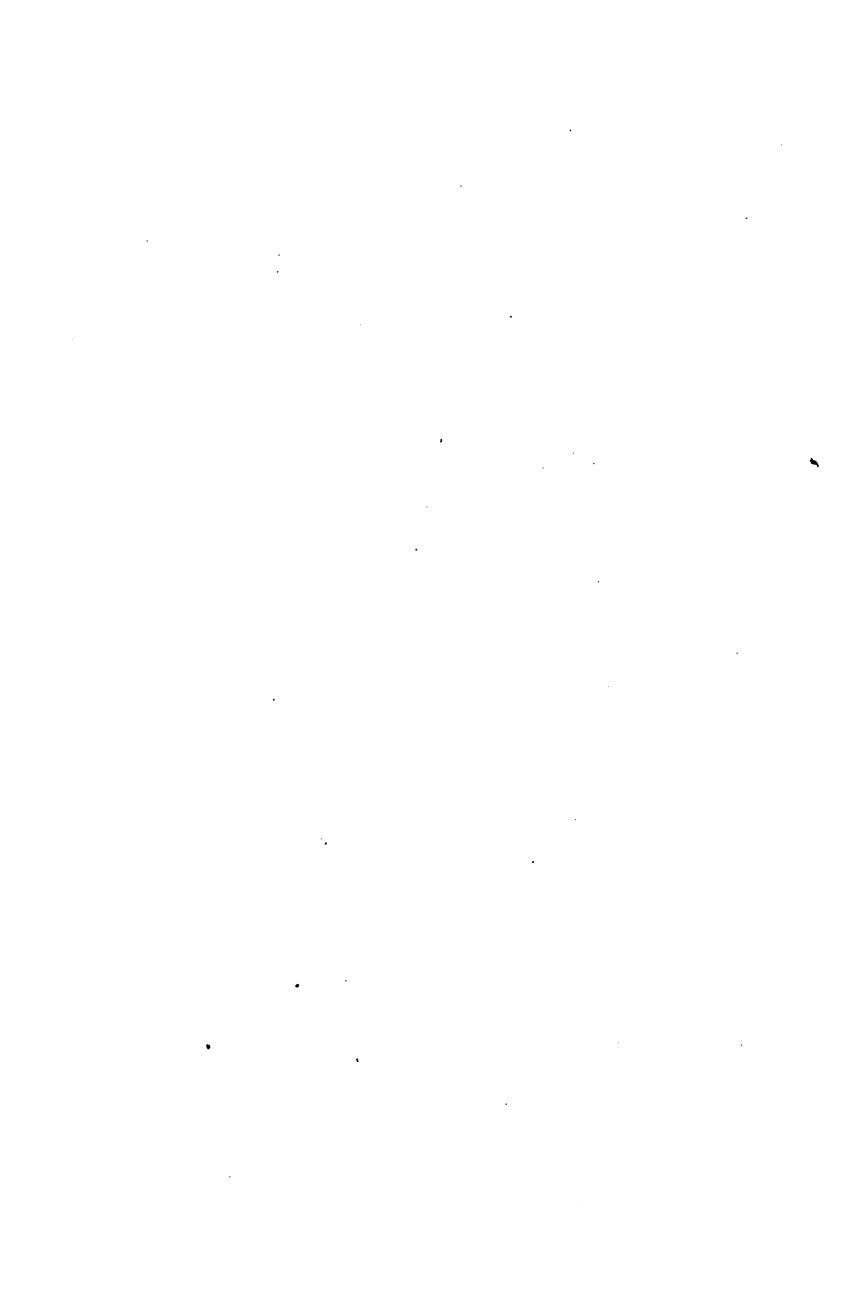
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THE BLESSED DEAD:

WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE REVEAL

OF

THEIR STATE BEFORE THE RESURRECTION?

BY THE

REV. E. H. BICKERSTETH, M.A.,

INCUMBENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, HAMPTSTEAD, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE
LORD BISHOP OF RIPON.

"O Spirit-world ! we are bound to thee
More closely than brothers and sisters be
To their childhood's home in love :
But, alas ! we are faithless, and often shed
Such bitter tears o'er the blessed dead,
As might sadden their rest above."

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THE following paper was one read before a private prophetic society a few months since. And as other friends, to whom it has been submitted, have expressed much interest in the line of Scripture investigation here pursued, I have been induced to lay these thoughts before a wider circle of readers, though deeply conscious what an imperfect sketch this paper presents of a most momentous subject. If other work permitted, I would gladly have filled up more at length the outline here roughly drawn; but, unable to redeem time for this at present, I yet venture to hope that this little essay may, with the Divine blessing, prove suggestive, especially to "those who mourn," of holy meditation on the communion of saints—a communion extending to the whole family in heaven and on earth, which bears the name of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST CHURCH PARSONAGE,
HAMPSTEAD, *17th October, 1862.*

I have taken advantage of a Second Edition of this little tract being called for to revise and rewrite certain paragraphs, though it still presents only a skeleton of truth which I must trust to others to fill up. But I cannot again send forth my humble messenger without earnestly reminding my readers that this essay only proposes to treat of the blessed dead, and that there is a solemn and awful reverse to these consolatory meditations. Nor can I lay down my pen without imploring any one whose conscience bears witness that he has not been "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," to-day while it is called to-day, to wash his robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. They who die in the Lord are blessed, but only they. E. H. B.

27th January, 1863.

THE BLESSED DEAD:

WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE REVEAL OF THEIR
STATE BEFORE THE RESURRECTION?

THIS must needs be a question of the deepest interest, whether we think of those now sleeping in Jesus whom we have known and loved; or whether we remember the bereaved mourners whom we are so often called to comfort with assurances gathered from the Word of God; or whether we consider that, if Christ does not return in our lifetime, then the Paradise of the blessed dead is the *next* stage before ourselves: and that which is *near and next* ever has such great influence.

What, then, says the Scripture regarding the intermediate state of departed saints, who are absent from the body and present with the Lord? Here, eminently, it becomes us to tread with humility, to take no partial views of truth, not to seek to be wise above what is written, but reve-

rently to gather up every scattered ray of Divine Revelation.

The period, to which our consideration is invited, is bounded on the one hand by the hour of the death of each saint, and on the other by the day of Christ's return, their One Lord. I do not enter on the details of that day: its morning, as I believe, ushered in by the sun-rise of the returning Saviour, and by the resurrection of the just; its millennial course of prevalent blessedness on earth; its solemn evening of universal judgment: all this lies beyond the limit of the interval in question. Our subject is the state and condition of disembodied saints.

I. IT IS A STATE OF IMPERFECTION.

St. Paul declares this expressly: "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect," Heb. xi. 39, 40. And again in his emphatic words: "Not for that we would

be unclothed," 2 Cor. v. 4. The body is here spoken of as the clothing of the spirit, and the unclothed (disembodied) state is not, the Apostle says, the consummation of our hopes. These are important as New Testament recognitions of truths so frequently and forcibly stated in the Old Testament: truths which at first sight have a very dark and depressing aspect. Let me instance :—

Psalm vi. 5: "In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave ("in Hades," *Sept.*) who shall give Thee thanks?"

Psalm xxx. 9: "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise Thee? shall it declare Thy truth?"

Psalm lxxxviii. 11: "Shall Thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? or Thy faithfulness in destruction?"

Eccles. ix. 10: "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

Isa. xxxviii. 18: "The grave cannot

praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee : they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth."

We must not ignore these and such like scriptures, or they will recur in hours of bereavement and desolation, and disquiet us most when we most need tranquillity, and assurance, and comfort. How, then, are we to understand them in connection with other scriptures, which certify us of the conscious blessedness of departed saints ?

It is true that it was reserved for the Incarnate Saviour to rend away the veil spread over all nations, and to swallow up death in victory (Isa. xxv. 7, 8) : it is true that you find no laments, betokening *such* gloom, in the New Testament ; but yet I think every honest student must admit that these words expressed the real mind of the writers,—writers who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost ; and, therefore, that this aspect of the state of the dead was no error whereby they were deceived, but *one* view of a great and solemn truth.

This mortal body of ours, so fearfully and wonderfully made, belongs to God. He formed it for his praise. So David sings, "Awake up, my glory," *i.e.*, "my tongue," Psal. lvii. 8. So St. Paul urges us to "present our *bodies* a living sacrifice," Rom. xii. 1; and exhorts us, in one breath, "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's," 1 Cor. vi. 20. Now this body and spirit "God hath joined together." Their union is the result of the counsel of his love, Gen. i. 26. Their separation one from the other is the result of man's sin, Gen. iii. 19; when "the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God, who gave it," Eccles. xii. 7. This is THE REIGN OF DEATH, in its earthly aspect, Rom. v. 14; the ghastly triumph of the king of terrors.

And in all these lamentations over the grave and those who go down to it, the eye of the Old Testament saint seems to have been fixed, either upon the body, which turned to dust; as, for example, Psal. xxx. 9, quoted above, "Shall the DUST praise Thee?"

in which view the expressions have their full weight; or else upon the powerlessness of the immortal spirit to reanimate its own natural tenement, and to make its own familiar organ vocal; or, finally, on this earth as the allotted theatre of man's service and worship. When death came, there was the end of saintly praise, so far as the Church militant was concerned. When David gave up the ghost, his harp might be touched by others, but not again by the sweet psalmist of Israel; for the "grave, would not praise God, nor death celebrate Him." This was that vanity of vanities which weighed so heavily on the mind of the preacher, whose cry, "vanity of vanities—all is vanity" (Eccles. i. 2), seems pointedly alluded to by St. Paul, Rom.viii. 20: "The creation was made subject to vanity."

The disembodied spirit is in a state of imperfection, an abnormal state, a state in itself bearing witness to the triumph of sin and death; and the sacred writers seemed to have been moved by the Spirit to bring strongly before us the execution of the sen-

tence which passed on Adam when he fell, "*Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,*" to humble our pride, and to prove our faith.

But now having freely and fully admitted that their state is one of imperfection and incompleteness, let us see its excellency and blessedness, *notwithstanding* this imperfection, as in part revealed to the Old Testament saints, and much more clearly to ourselves.

II. IT IS A STATE OF REST.

Thus Job says : " Why died I not from the womb ?" . . . " For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept. . . . There the wicked cease from troubling and there the weary are at rest." Job iii. 11—19.

And the spirit of Samuel asks, " Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up ?" 1 Sam. xxviii. 15.

And Isaiah writes, " The righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace : they shall rest in

their beds:" [to which is immediately added, as if to negative the suspicion of mindless repose] "each one walking in his uprightness." Is. lvii. 1, 2.

This seems the prominent thought in the word "*sleep*," which is so frequently used of death, relating perhaps first to the body, which is laid in the grave as in a bed, but also, when used of the saints, to the calm rest of the spirit when the day's work is over.

To this the following passages bear abundant witness:—

Dan. xii. 2: "Many of *them that sleep* in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

John xi. 11: "Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*." Observe, still *our friend*, though asleep.

Acts vii. 60: "And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

1 Thess. iv. 14: "Them that sleep in Jesus (τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*) will God bring with Him."

* Observe, the *διὰ* here, not *ἐν*, Jesus the efficient *cause* of their rest.

Rev. xiv. 13 : "They rest from their labours."

Oh, sweet and blessed rest ! rest from physical toil, rest from mental weariness, rest from pain and from the shadows of death, rest from dim and indistinct views of truth, rest from the consciousness of leaving so much undone, rest from grieving the Spirit, rest from anxiety over the souls of others, rest from conflict with the powers of darkness.

When we are made to feel "all things are full of labour ; man cannot utter it," Eccles. i. 8 ; how much this one word *rest* tells us of the blessed dead.

III. IT IS A STATE OF CONSCIOUSLY LIVING TO GOD.

Thus Genesis xxvi. 24 : "I am the God of Abraham thy father ;" when Abraham was dead : and Genesis xxviii. 13, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac ;" the same declaration respecting both, though then Abraham was dead and Isaac was alive. And then Ex-

odus iii. 6: "I am the God of thy father" (does this refer to Amram distinctively, who we know from *Heb.* xi. 23, was a man of faith?) "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," which our Lord, in proving the resurrection of the dead, expounds thus:—"He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto Him." Compare Rom. vii. 11, where "alive unto God" is spoken of spiritual life.

This seems conclusive that it is no state of unconscious slumber, as some have supposed; not the rest of a stone; but conscious, intelligent life, capable of fellowship with and fruition of God.

To this we may add the interesting and important testimony of St. Peter, that our Lord "*having been put to death in his (human) flesh, but quickened in spirit (i.e., in his disembodied human spirit), went and preached even to the spirits in prison,*" 1 Peter iii. 18, 19. Whence we learn that, when Jesus Christ died upon the Cross, his human spirit being separated from his human flesh, acquired new life, gained new

powers of motion, and travelled (*ἐπορεύθη*) on a blessed mission to the region of departed spirits. See Wordsworth's cautious and reverent exposition of this difficult passage—an exposition entirely in harmony with the 3rd Article of the Church of England, as first published, viz., "That the body of Christ lay in the grave till his resurrection, but his spirit which He gave up was with the spirits which are detained in prison, or in hell, and preached to them, as the place in St. Peter testifieth." These words were afterwards omitted, but our Church sufficiently indicates her interpretation of this Scripture by appointing it to be read as the epistle on Easter even. As, therefore, Christ's human spirit was not in any way impaired by death, but was quickened therein, we may assuredly gather that our spirit shall suffer no loss, but acquire new life, when it shall have been delivered from the burden of the flesh.

IV. IT IS A STATE OF BEING WITH CHRIST.

Not only in general terms of conscious

life to-God-ward, but of personal intercourse with Him, who reveals the Father, and is the brightness of his glory.

This dominion over *the dead* as well as over the quick, was included in the great design of Christ's redeeming work; for "to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9.

So He said to the dying thief, "To-day thou shalt be WITH ME in paradise." *Luke* xxiii. 43.

So, *Phil.* i. 23: "To depart, and to be with Christ, is far better."

So, 2 *Cor.* v. 8: "Absent from the body, present with the Lord;" *present like a citizen at home in his own country*, and not a co-existence only in the same locality. But the next verse is most suggestive: "Wherefore we labour" (*φιλοτιμούμεθα*, "are ambitious," "love the honour"), "whether present or absent, to be accepted of Him" or "well-pleasing to Him;" which proves that in the disembodied state the saints in the immediate presence of Jesus covet and

enjoy the honour of His complacent approval. There they see Him whom unseen they loved.

V. IT IS A STATE OF PARADISIACAL BLISS.

For the Lord said to the thief upon the cross, not only "to-day thou shalt be with me," but "with me in paradise." Paradise, then, is one division of Hades—the abode of blessed in contrast to that of lost souls.

Thus the words of Samuel to Saul, "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me," 1 Sam. xxviii. 19, when we remember that this included godly Jonathan, suggest that there is *one* comprehensive receptacle of the dead; one, though sundered by a great gulph into two divisions—the respective habitations of woe and of felicity. This is confirmed by the rich man seeing Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom; the whole scene is represented as taking place "in Hades." Compare also the words of the Psalmist, as quoted Acts ii. 27, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (*εἰς ᾗδου*), i.e., in Hades.

Is it asked where paradise is? We can only answer in the words of the patriarch, "hell (Hades, *Sept.*) is naked before Him and destruction hath no covering," Job xxvi. 6. Compare Psalm cxxxix. 8, and Prov. xv. 11. Hades signifies "the unseen world;" and its limits and locality are among the secret things which belong to the Lord our God.

Some Scriptures seem to point us *upwards*, as Eccles. iii. 21, "The spirit of man goeth upward." And consult Acts vii. 55—60. To these many would add, 2 Cor. xii. 4, "Caught up into Paradise;" but we cannot argue from this expression that St. Paul's rapture was to the Hades of blessed souls; for, as here used by him, it seems to be equivalent (see ver. 2) with being "caught up to the third heaven" (*ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ*); and the third heaven is a Jewish phrase for the heaven of heavens, the scene of the immediate manifestation of the Divine glory.

Many more Scriptures, on the other hand, seem to point to Hades as a region

below. The dying are frequently spoken of as "going *down* to the pit," or "going *down* into silence," etc.; so we read "David is not ascended into the heavens," Acts ii. 34. And our Lord says of Himself, "The Son of Man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," Matt. xii. 40. And the apostle writes of Him, "He descended first into the lower parts of the earth," Eph. iv. 9. So that, perhaps, our conceptions of *up* and *down*, height and depth, ascent and descent, are here altogether at fault: and with respect to the *locality* of Hades, "the thing is hidden from us." But seeing that *paradise* is the word used by the Septuagint for "the garden" of Eden or Delight, that it was currently employed by the Jews to designate the place of peace and joy in which the faithful dead awaited their joyful resurrection, and that our Lord (Luke xxiii. 43) solemnly sanctions such usage, we may confidently conclude that this name of their home implies purity and gladness, and that those who dwell therein must

enjoy a freedom from every sorrow, and a rich profusion of supply for every want.

I do not adduce Rev. ii. 7, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God," as it is doubtful whether any of the promises to the seven churches refer to the intermediate state, and not rather to the future and final glory of the saints.

VI. IT IS A STATE OF MUTUAL RECOGNITION;
AND MOREOVER OF HOLY FELLOWSHIP,
BOTH OF SAINTS WITH SAINTS AND OF
SAINTS WITH ANGELS.

It might seem almost superfluous to demand Scripture proofs of so self-evident a truth as the mutual recognition of saints in another world, if it were not strangely questioned by some in our own day. Man is conscious of his own existence, of his standing before God, his Creator, and of his relationship to his fellow-men. In this threefold consciousness consists his life. You cannot separate one from the other.

If, after death, I do not know myself as the same being I was before, it is not “ I ” who continue to live : if I do not recognize my unbroken relationship to God all moral and spiritual connection of this world with the next is at the end : and so, if I do not know again those whom I have known on earth, my identity and individuality are lost. If I know myself there, I must know God, who made me ; and if I know myself and my Maker, I must know my fellow-saints in the heavenly household. We should as soon expect to find an elaborate proof of this most certain truth in Scripture, as of our own personal identity being preserved. But the following passages, in which the recognition of saints is taken for granted, may serve to dispel any clouds that may obscure the prospects of some believers. In this limited enquiry, regarding the blessed dead *before the resurrection*, I am not at liberty to adduce those scriptures which tell of their mutual joy in each other’s society, when clothed in their incorruptible bodies, such as Matt. xxv. 40 ;

1 Thess. ii. 19; iv. 13—18; 2 Thess. ii. 1; etc., etc., but without these enough remain to tell, that the hopes of dying saints without number, that they are immediately about to rejoin those who have fallen asleep before them, are no baseless dreams.

The frequent expression, “gathered to his fathers,” as of Abraham (Genesis xxv. 8), is surely suggestive. When man went to his “long home” (Eccles. xii. 5), he went to the great trysting-place of his fathers.

1 Sam. xxviii. 14, establishes the fact that the *spirit* of one who is dead is recognizable; for “Saul perceived that it was Samuel.” Samuel’s body was lying “buried in his house at Ramah” (1 Sam. xxv. 1), but his bodiless spirit was by God’s permission seen and conversed with by Saul. *How* the lineaments of an immortal spirit were made visible, and his tones audible to a mortal man, we know not; but the plain historic statement surely does not admit of doubt.

Isa. xiv. 12—19, sets forth the descent

of the King of Babylon to Hades. The spirits below "narrowly look upon him and consider him," and ask tauntingly, "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?" Hence, by parity of reasoning, by every analogy, the blessed dead will also be recognized and welcomed, as one by one they join the circle which is being gathered in Paradise.

So David solaces himself respecting the infant he has lost—"I shall go to him" (2 Sam. xii. 33).

In the transfiguration, Moses (disembodied) and Elijah (embodied) were evidently known by each other, and by the disciples. We may suppose the Lord introduced the Old Testament saints to his apostles, or Peter, James, and John may have heard Him addressing Moses and Elijah by their names; but, however this may have been, when once they were revealed, there was no difficulty of recognition, no confusion. The favoured disciples heard the subject of the elder saints' conversation with the Lord, and Peter

expressed the blessedness they all felt. Observe also that both Moses and Elijah are said to have "appeared IN GLORY" (Luke ix. 31). This justifies the use of the word "glory," as applied to their state who now sleep in Jesus.

Luke xvi. 22: In this story of the rich man and Lazarus (and the name of the beggar being given, as in any other authentic narrative, seems to indicate that it is rather history than parable), the spirit of Lazarus is "carried by the angels" (*ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων*—are we to understand *the* angels who had been his ministering spirits?) into Abraham's bosom. The father of the faithful is represented as knowing him and comforting him. Dives knows both the patriarch and the beggar. Their past life on earth is vividly present to all.

Heb. xii. 22—24: with all its great difficulties of interpretation, surely certifies us that there is a high and holy communion which we by faith anticipate, betwixt "the myriads of angels, the church of the first-

born, and the spirits of just men made perfect."

Rev. iv. and v. : crown the witness of Scripture to the united adoration of saints and angels, as now gathered in the presence of Him that sitteth upon the throne and of the Lamb. All the distinctive features of that glorious scene point to its being a revelation of that which is now taking place in heaven, and not of the eternal ages after the resurrection.

VII. IT IS A STATE OF VICTORY AND ASSURANCE OF REWARD.

The expression just quoted, "the spirits of just men made perfect" (τετελειωμένων), seems at first sight to preclude any imperfection; but the image is taken from the athletes who, having won the crown in the Isthmian games, stood ready to receive it; just as among ourselves a Victoria Cross may have been bravely won, and the award gazetted, and yet the cross itself not have been received by the soldier from his sovereign's hands: *that* awaits his presentation

on some great field-day. So here, in that the just had run their race and won their prize, they were made perfect (τετελειωμένοι); Cf. 2 Tim. iv. 7—"I have finished (τετέλεκα) my course:"—in that they had not received it, they without us were not yet perfect; and so St. Paul immediately adds of himself, as being yet an uncrowned victor, "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness."

Again, we read, "Their works do follow them," Rev. xiv. 13. There is some ambiguity in the expression in English, whether it may not refer to the effects on earth, after their death, of their labours of love. These effects no doubt surpass all human calculation. Shakspeare was wrong when he said:—

"The evil that men do lives after them ;
The good is oft interred with their bones."

No man liveth and no man dieth to himself. Every work of love is like the fruit-tree, whose seed is in itself, after its kind. This, however, is not the fact revealed here. There is no doubtfulness in the

Greek. "Their works do follow along with them" (*ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν*), when they die in the Lord. Nothing else passes the gates of the grave; his pomp shall not follow the man of pride, nor his wealth the man of riches; but of toil, time, talents devoted to Christ, none of these things are lost. The memory is ever fragrant, the influence is ever powerful, and the reward commences when the soul enters Paradise.

VIII. Lastly, I would say, IT IS A STATE OF EARNEST, THOUGH NOT IRKSOME, OF PATIENT, THOUGH NOT PAINFUL, EXPECTANCY.

Thus, Job xiv. 12—15: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come."

And possibly Isa. xxv. 9, includes the welcome of the blessed dead as part of the Church who shall cry, "Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him."

And so in Rom. viii. 23—25, if we eliminate the thoughts of the *suffering*, but retain that of the *longing*, we may reason-

ably apply the passage to the departed saints as part of the whole creation.

Nor can we forget the apostle's glowing words, after his noble enumeration of the faithful in Hebrews xi. "Therefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race set before us," etc., Heb. xii. 1. It is a living picture drawn from the throngs of spectators at the Corinthian games, or in the Roman circus. We must not, indeed, so press the metaphor as to attempt to prove from it that departed saints actually see our struggles here; but this, at least, we learn, that they are intensely eager for the success of the Church militant here on earth, as having themselves fought the good fight of faith, and now waiting for the last trump, and the final shout of victory.

And so yet more distinctly, Rev. vi. 10: "The souls under the altar cry, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' White

robes were given them, and it was said unto them that they should wait yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants and their brethren should be fulfilled." This indicates a knowledge in the blessed dead, probably derived from Christ, and from those who are continually joining their society (do many hours now pass without some saint leaving us and going home?), a knowledge of things transpiring on earth, and an earnest longing for the second Advent.

There need be no sorrow in this yearning: but thus they share more fully the mind of Christ, who is Himself expecting till his foes be made his footstool. A lofty and even nearer hope must animate every heart: the time is short, and the perfected glory certain.

On the whole, when we combine these various elements of their present happiness, and reflect that theirs is—

A state of rest;

A state of consciously living to God;

A state of being with Christ;

A state of Paradisiacal bliss ;

A state of mutual recognition and of holy fellowship ;

A state of victory and of assurance of reward ;

A state of earnest expectation ;
how abundantly is the Apostle's declaration proved, "To depart and be with Christ is FAR BETTER," Phil. i. 23. How reasonable appears his willingness: "We are confident and WILLING rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 8. And how heart-gladdening is the voice which the beloved John heard from heaven, "Blessed are the dead which die* in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them," Rev. xiv. 13.

While we grant, therefore, that the state

* "The dead which die"—*οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἀποθνήσκοντες*—the *νεκροὶ* shows that it is not the *dying* believer, but the believer after death that is intended ; the *ἀποθνήσκοντες* shows that it refers to the present dispensation, when believers *are dying* in the Lord, and falling asleep one by one.

of the blessed dead is imperfect—imperfect personally while their bodies are here in the grave; imperfect socially, while so many of their brethren are yet fighting their way here on earth; yet, seeing that they enjoy rest from every labour and every grief; that theirs is a spiritual life to Godward of far higher intelligence than is possible here below; that they are with Jesus, whom to see was their most ardent desire in their most holy moments when in the flesh; that they repose in a paradise of delight and of peace; that they know each the other whom they have known before, and are introduced to elder saints, and share the society of angels; that they have won the prize and are assured of the reward; and that they are expecting the near accomplishment of all the counsel of God in the marriage-supper of the Lamb, we enter more deeply than ever into David's words, "O, that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest."

Till He Come.

1 COR. XI. 26.

“TILL HE COME”—Oh! let the words
Linger on the trembling chords;
Let the little while between
In their golden light be seen;
Let us think how heaven and home
Lie beyond that “Till He come.”

When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the earth so poor and vast,
All our life-joy overcast?
Hush, be every murmur dumb:
It is only—till He come.

Clouds and conflicts round us press:
Would we have one sorrow less?
All the sharpness of the cross,
All that tells the world is loss,
Death, and darkness, and the tomb,
Only whisper, “Till He come.”

See, the feast of love is spread,
Drink the wine and break the bread:—
Sweet memorials,—till the Lord
Call us round his heavenly board:
Some from earth, from glory some,
Severed only—till He come.

E. H. B.

1862.

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- OF SANCTIFICATION.
- "I WILL cleanse you."—Ezek. xxxvi. 25.
- OF JUDGMENT.
- "I WILL set my face against that man."—Ezek. xiv. 8.
- OF SHEPHERDING.
- "I WILL feed my flock."—Ezek. xxxiv. 15.
- OF EDUCATION.
- "I WILL instruct thee and teach thee."—Psalm xxxii. 8.
- OF CHASTENING.
- "I WILL correct thee in measure."—Jer. xlv. 28.
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- "I WILL make them joyful in my house of prayer."—Isaiah lvi. 7.
- OF RECEIVING TO HIMSELF THOSE WHO COME OUT OF THE
WORLD.
- "I WILL receive you."—2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.
- OF BENEDICTION.
- "I WILL bless thee."—Gen. xii. 2.
- OF SELF-MANIFESTATION.
- "I WILL manifest myself to him."—John xiv. 21.
- OF DELIVERANCE IN DANGER AND IN DEATH.
- "I WILL be with thee."—Isaiah xliii. 2.
- OF COMING.
- "I WILL come again."—John xiv. 3.
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